

THE MISSOURI STATE ARCHIVES

WHERE HISTORY BEGINS

DECEMBER 2025



Denny Hoskins, CPA
Missouri Secretary of State

Friends of the
Missouri State Archives



Missouri Secretary of State
State Archives

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WINTER HOURS (SEPTEMBER TO MAY)

Monday to Friday: 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Second Saturday: 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.
Third Thursday: 8:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.

SUMMER HOURS (JUNE TO AUGUST)

Monday to Friday: 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Second and Fourth Saturdays: 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.
Third Thursday: 8:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.



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ON THE COVER

Mark Twain at his boyhood home in Hannibal. May 1902. (Source: *Mark Twain Boyhood Home and Museum Collection, Manuscript Collection 527*; Photographed by Anna Schnizlein; *Missouri State Archives*)

ABOVE

State Records stored in the basement of the Capitol. (Source: *Office of the Secretary of State, Record Group 5*; *Missouri State Archives*)

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FROM THE STATE ARCHIVIST

Above: Missouri State Archivist John Dougan rinsing photographs as a part of the conservation lab's MayDayPrep activity for emergency preparedness, May 2025. (Source: Photographed by MSA staff member; Missouri State Archives)

While looking forward to significant anniversaries next year — America250 and the Route 66 Centennial — we would be remiss to not point out that the Archives celebrated its 60th year of preserving and providing access to the state's records in 2025. Alex Petrovich sponsored the bill that created the Missouri State Archives in 1965. Since then, a tremendous amount of work has been accomplished. The state's records are no longer stored haphazardly in the basement of the Capitol Power Plant and other random locations, but rather in our wonderful facility that opened in 1991. Many of our most requested records, including our Death Certificates, are now online, available through the Archives' Research Databases and Missouri Digital Heritage.

Researchers continue to find these resources valuable with the website having over 16.4 million views in just the last year. We would encourage you to peruse the "new" State Roads Surveys (1837–1867) that document the state's earliest roads and

those living along them. The County and Municipal Records Database now contains 10,000 volumes from 103 Missouri counties with a few more volumes being added each week. 55,000 cases were recently added to the Judicial Database, our largest quarterly addition in decades.

This year was also not without challenges. Legislative budget cuts caused the layoff of seventeen staff in May. This next month brings the upgrade to the division's records tracking system, the largest and most complicated technology project in our history. Several agencies transferred substantial, even massive, collections to the Archives this year that will take decades to fully process. In the end, we remain committed to our preservation and access mission, and more than ever, we are thankful for the support of our Friends organization.

John Dougan

ARCHIVES AFIELD!

COURTHOUSE DISASTERS

BY CHRISTINA MILLER
REFERENCE SERVICES DIRECTOR

Archives staff were recently inspired to create a map highlighting courthouse disasters around the state. We began by combining a few internal lists and polling our field archivists, and then adding a few disasters mentioned on our social media.

We are defining disaster to include significant structural damage or records loss. Events like a courthouse being fired upon during the Civil War with superficial damage (such as Lafayette County) were not listed.

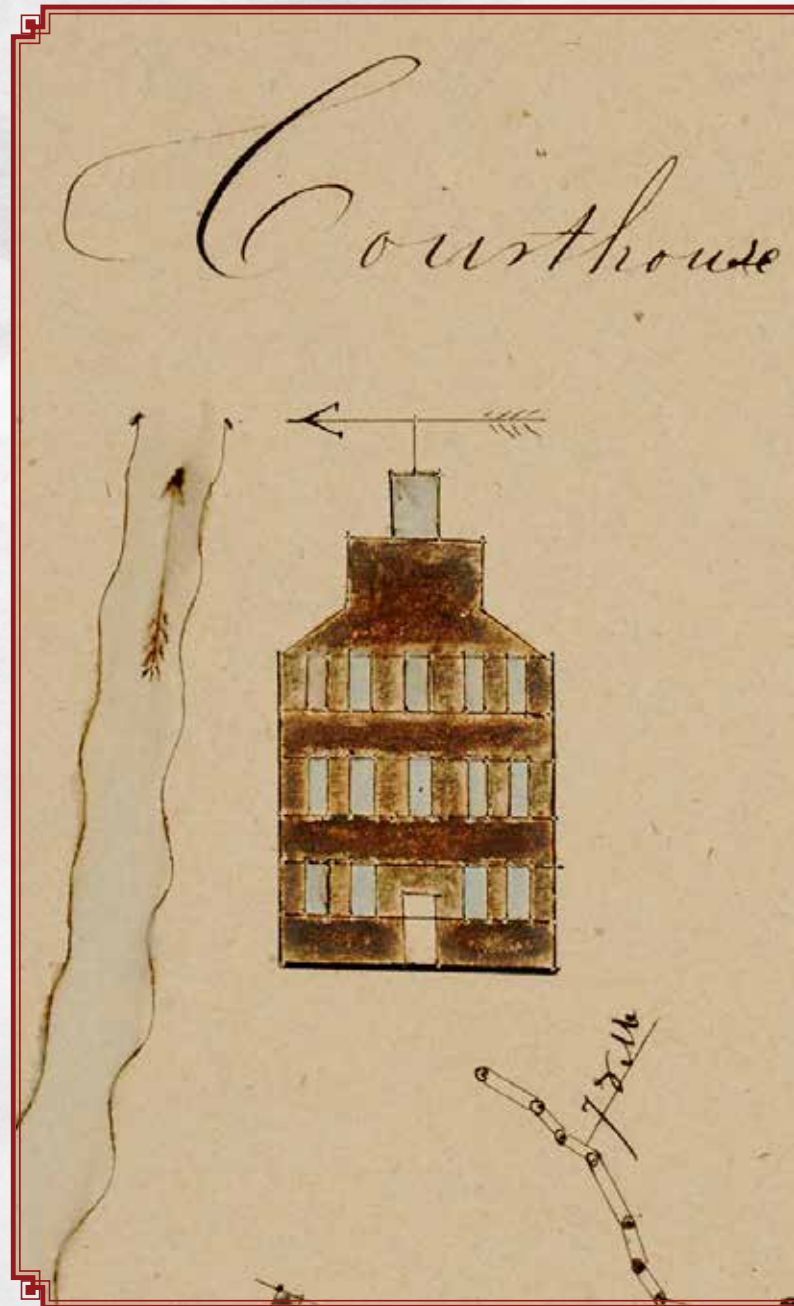
Disasters are separated into fire, flood, and wind/tornado sub-categories, with map color-coding for mixed disasters for those that had more than one disaster type. The decision was made to include any type of explosion under the fire category. This includes the bombing of the Franklin County Courthouse (1969) and the West Plains dance hall explosion in Howell County (1928) which did enough damage to condemn the courthouse across the square.

The map currently includes 113 disasters from 72 counties, with 104 fires, 2 floods, and 7 wind or tornado disasters. Six counties had multiple types of disasters. Hickory, Shannon, Texas, and Wright counties have the distinction of four disasters each.

Luckily not every disaster saw records loss, or complete records losses, but being aware of disasters can help explain missing records or gaps in the records.

A few heartrending situations involve records in Reynolds and Ripley Counties. Records were evacuated from these courthouses before they were burned to the ground during the Civil War. Despite the records surviving the war, all were destroyed in later fires.

The archives does not presume this map to be complete. If you have detailed, contemporary documentation of the disasters listed or verified additions, please email the details (and any supporting records) to archives@sos.mo.gov.



Above: Portion of the State Road Survey for Jake's Prairie, Gasconade County to Iberia, Miller County to Oregon, Kinderhook (Camden) County featuring illustration of the original Kinderhook (modern Camden) County Courthouse. 1843. Some county records were lost in a courthouse fire on January 28, 1902. (Source: *State Road Surveys*; Land Department, Office of the Secretary of State, Record Group 5.52; Missouri State Archives)

Courthouse disasters are also not the only cause of records loss. Prior to the 1972 creation of the Local Records Board (1972 Laws p. 642), retention of most county records was completely in the hands of presiding judges and county commissioners. There are known examples of now permanent records in Wayne, Pike, and Jackson counties (amongst others) being destroyed because they were deemed no longer useful. Additionally, not all records are permanent. Some are routinely destroyed according to Local Records approved retention schedules and Supreme Court approved retention requirements (Court Rule 8).



Bottom Left: Butler County Courthouse following an EF4 tornado that severely damaged Poplar Bluff and killed 98 people. May 9, 1927. (Source: Butler County Missouri Historical Society, Poplar Bluff)

EXAMPLES

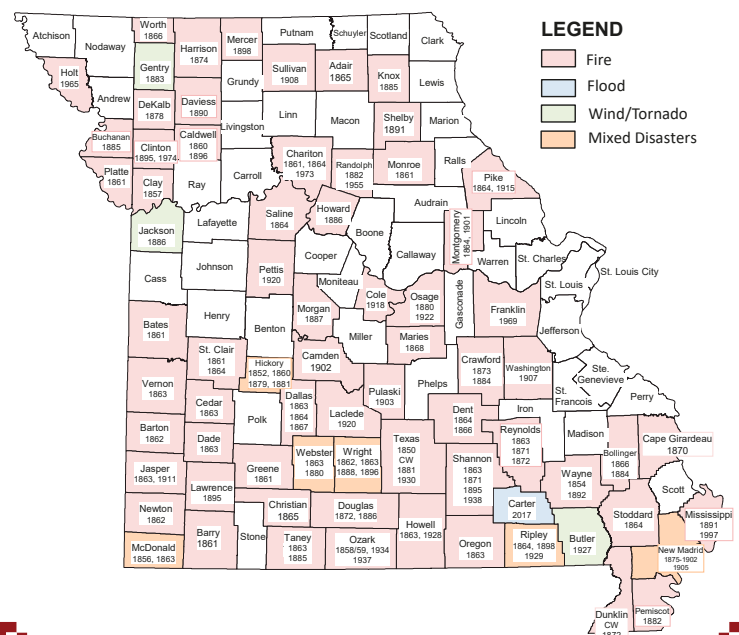
On November 13, 1969 the **Franklin County Courthouse** was bombed as a diversion during a bank robbery next door. Luckily, records loss was minimal.

The **New Madrid County Courthouse** flooded multiple times between 1875 and 1902. Since specific dates and levels of damage are unknown, this was counted as one event. Evidence of flooding is sporadic across the records.

The **Butler County Courthouse** was struck by a tornado May 9, 1927, scattering documents across southeast Missouri. While many documents did make their way back to the county seat, there are gaps in the records.

The **Gentry County Courthouse** was destroyed by a windstorm on July 13, 1883. Surviving records were retrieved and stored in a business that was destroyed by fire that same year, and most records were lost.

Courthouse Disasters Map →



PICTURE THIS!
THE PUCKETT CAVE SKELETON: MYTH BUSTING THE

"OZARK GIANT"

BY ERIKA WOHLK
VISUAL MATERIALS ARCHIVIST



“

According to *The Steelville Ledger*, Parker believed the individual to be
“A MAN OF GIANT SIZE.”

Above and Right: Guy Forshey's composite photograph sent to the Smithsonian. It shows the bones on display in (or probably just outside) Dr. Parker's Steelville, MO office. On the reverse, Forshey wrote, "Skeleton of the Ozark cave giant. The man lying beside the skeleton is 6 feet tall." (Source: *Smithsonian Institution*)

Just a few days before his sixteenth birthday in May 1933, Billy Harman (1917–1986) was searching for artifacts in the woods and streams of Crawford County near Steelville. He came upon Puckett Cave, began digging, and unearthed a complete human skeleton. A local physician, Dr. R. C. Parker (1870–1952), was called in to consult. The doctor rearticulated the skeleton and displayed the bones in cardboard boxes at his office. According to The Steelville Ledger, Parker believed the individual to be “a man of giant size.”

Follow-up stories read that Parker estimated the skeleton to be 7 ½ feet tall. His sensationalism soon caught the attention of anthropologists, reporters, and curiosity-seekers. Notably, Guy Forshey with the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch Sunday Magazine* traveled to Steelville to photograph and report on the Puckett Cave skeleton.

Prior to Forshey's arrival, Dr. Parker sent an inquiry to the Missouri Museum of Anthropology asking them for input. Museum Commission Curator Dr. A. C. Burrill responded and suggested that Parker take a measurement of the femur, and that he should send the bones to Dr. Aleš Hrdlička at the National Museum in Washington, D.C., better known as the Smithsonian Institution. Simultaneously, George Burkhart, a lawyer in Indianapolis, wrote to the Smithsonian informing them of the bones he saw on display in Dr. Parker's office in Steelville on May 14.

Parker penned an inquiry to the Smithsonian on May 19 asking if they would analyze the bones. He included that the femur measured 18 inches. They sent him two replies dated May 25 and May 26, both stating they were very interested in the bones and asking Dr. Parker to mail them to Washington.



SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION
UNITED STATES NATIONAL MUSEUM
Museum No. 124484
June 2, 1933.
SPECIMENS RECEIVED FOR EXAMINATION
(Sender) Dr. R. C. Parker
(Address) Steelville, Missouri
REPORT
The skeleton came today in good condition. On examination I find the following:
The skeleton is that of a strong male, of approximately 50 years of age, and of tall stature, but not exceeding six feet.
There are no marks of any special nationality on the bones.
The skull and lower jaw show a normal conformation. There is nothing Neanderthaloid; the orbital ridges, in fact, were smaller than average.
The racial characters of the skeleton are not very definite. There is much that speaks against its being a fullblood Indian. It could have been a white man of the ordinary American type, or a mixed blood Indian-white.
The above is about all that can be said in brief about the specimen. In view of the uncertainty of racial identification
Disposition of material:
(Signature) A. Hrdlička
(Title) Curator
Approved for transmittal to sender.
June 2, 1933

Above: Dr. A. Hrdlička's report on the Steelville, Missouri cave skeleton, dated June 2, 1933. (Source: Smithsonian Institution)

Also on May 26, reporter Guy Forshey wrote to the Smithsonian's Dr. Hrdlička and included two photographs of the bones:

The Smithsonian responded on May 29 to Forshey stating that the bones, based solely off Dr. Parker's 18-inch femur measurement, do “not indicate a ‘giant of eight feet.’” This was the first time an expert weighed in, and it contradicted the quickly-growing myth of the skeleton's height. Assuming Forshey received the letter prior to his newspaper's publication, it made no difference to him. His paper ran his story on June 11, 1933.

Meanwhile, Dr. Parker received the Smithsonian's responses to his offer to send them the bones, which he did promptly. Dr. Hrdlička wrote his official report on June 2nd, the same day he received the bones:

Hrdlička concluded the height of the individual does not exceed six feet. Mr. A. Wetmore, Assistant Secretary, wrote to Dr. Parker on the 6th and shared Dr. Hrdlička's conclusions. There, in writing, Parker would have seen, “The skeleton is that of a strong male, of approximately 50 years of age, and of tall stature, but not exceeding six feet.”

Readership of the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* far exceeded that of *The Steelville Ledger*. Despite responses from the Smithsonian to both Dr. Parker and Forshey, Forshey's audience was presented with a story headlined, “An Ancient Ozark Giant Dug Up Near Steelville.” The story included a slightly different photograph than the ones pictured here, as well as a portrait of Billy Harman. The text of Forshey's article is very fantastical, and offensive

by today's standards. He made wild assertions regarding the man's supposed habits and lifestyle, going far beyond exaggerating his height.

Sadly, though not surprisingly, the myth of the "Ozark Giant" has persisted through today. A brief paragraph in an anthropological study titled, *Stone-Age Men of Crawford County*, written by Carl H. Chapman (a State Museum Research Assistant under Dr. A. C. Burrill) was published in June 1936. At the very end of the article, Chapman wrote, "In a cave about seven miles from Steelville a skeleton was found by two boys. The skeleton was well over six feet tall and was judged to be that of an Osage Indian from the height of the skeleton and from the relics found with it." Already, a mere three years after the Smithsonian issued its report, the perception of this man being extraordinarily tall was still being perpetuated, and by a professional, no less.

In 1956, J. Harlen Bretz published his definitive work *Caves of Missouri* with the Division of Geological Survey and Water Resources. In it, he said that the Post-Dispatch photograph "fails to prove" the alleged height of eight feet. Finally, there was a rebuttal in print!

In September 1972, Leonard Butts wrote in the *Meramec Caver* (and reprinted in *Foresight*) that he was in search of the bones. His article included an excerpt from Forshey with the exaggerated eight-foot height. Caver Marc S. Perez of Fenton, MO undertook a similar search for the bones in 1997. The outcomes of both searches are unknown, though it is probably safe to assume neither man found the bones.

Then, on November 11, 2014, an episode called "A Photo, a Tooth, the Truth" in the television series *Search for the Lost Giants* aired on the History Channel. The episode perpetuated the myth that the skeleton found in 1933 was that of a "giant." The conspiracy-laden piece of entertainment unfairly

maligned the Smithsonian, insinuating a coverup. Had they reached out to the Smithsonian, they would have found the image below.

In 2021–2022, the Missouri State Archives received a large collection of cave resources from the estate of H. Dwight Weaver. Weaver (1938–2020) was a well-known Missouri caver and researcher. In the course of processing his collection (still ongoing), the author uncovered the Leonard Butts snippet in *Foresight*. The Archives now holds copies of the Smithsonian's files on the Puckett Cave skeleton and a vertical file of additional resources for those who are interested.

Emphasizing the use of primary sources is important to archivists and researchers alike; in fact, it is something MSA staff does annually with middle school and high school students participating in National History Day. Dr. Hrdlička's report and the rest of the correspondence from the Smithsonian are the only primary sources uncovered with regard to the Puckett Cave skeletal remains.

Though tall people are not unheard of – Missouri has two famous examples: 8'4" Ella Ewing (1872–1913) and 7'7 ½" Henry Clay Thruston (c1830–1909) – the so-called "Ozark Giant" is not among them.

Today, there are laws protecting buried individuals, especially Indigenous people. It would be wonderful to conclude here that the skeletal remains were rediscovered, reanalyzed, and reburied with respect. Instead, the trail ends in Steelville with the Railway Express shipping slip and Dr. Parker.

If you know additional details about the Puckett Cave skeleton, please reach out to archives@sos.mo.gov or to the Museum of Anthropology at anthromuseum@missouri.edu. Finally, if you have further suggestions for busting Missouri myths with primary sources, let us know. Maybe your topic will appear in a future newsletter!

In lieu of signing each page of this book shipper has signed the agreement on the inside front cover. (ORIGINAL)

RAILWAY EXPRESS AGENCY
(INCORPORATED)
89-292 U.S. National Museum

RECEIVED FROM
listed, which the Company agrees to carry subject to the Classifications and Tariffs in effect on date hereof, and to the terms and conditions and agreements on the inside front cover of this book.

the shipments, inasmuch as the terms and conditions are printed on the back of this slip, are NOT NEGOTIABLE.

Date July, 15-1933

at _____

Number and Description of Pieces	Value Herein Declared by Shipper to be	CONSIGNEE TO	DESTINATION
One Pkg. Anthropological specimens of skeleton material	\$50.00	Dr. R. C. Parker, Steelville, Missouri.	weight 14 3/4 lbs Express Collect

When entering shipments forwarded C. O. D., always use two lines. Employee receiving for C. O. D. shipments must sign his name (not initials) directly following each C. O. D. entry.

R. C. Parker

For the Consignee

Left: Railway Express Agency shipping slip, July 15, 1933, verifying the bones were returned to Dr. Parker. (Source: Smithsonian Institution)

The final item in the Smithsonian's paperwork on the matter is this shipping made out to Dr. R. C. Parker, Steelville, Missouri, from the U.S. National Museum for one package containing anthropological specimens of skeleton material. The slip was signed by a shipping company employee verifying the receipt of this special C.O.D. shipment.

SOCIAL MEDIA REWIND

The Archives prides itself on our social media presence. Through our Facebook, Instagram, Flickr, and YouTube pages, we deliver timely, well-researched, educational posts to a global audience. Our Facebook page now has over 20,000 followers. This summer, our posts caught the attention of KRCG 13, and we now collaborate with the network to create a weekly Heartland History segment for their Wednesday morning broadcasts.

We hope you will connect with us virtually. Until then, please enjoy a selection of teasers from our most viewed posts from 2025 thus far. For full text and additional images, follow us on Facebook.



MAP MONDAY: SWAMPEAST. MISERY

February 10, 2025

While southeast Missouri is colloquially known as the Bootheel, due to its distinctive curving shape, it has also been called by another name: the "Swampeast." This area of Missouri, to the west of the Mississippi, historically flooded on a regular basis, leading to fertile bottomland hardwood forests of cypress, oak, and ash trees. These environments filter floodwater and help prevent severe flooding further downstream, in addition to providing a rich environment for migratory birds, fish, and insects.



FASHION FRIDAY: 1890

February 14, 2025

For #FashionFriday, we present to you not just one, but seven gorgeous looks from the 1890s. Shown here courtesy of the Missouri State Museum's African American Portrait gallery are seven Black women standing in line, holding hands. Each woman is dressed traditionally for the time period: lengthy A-line dresses with long sleeves and high collars. A closer examination of the photo reveals each woman's personal style. Some women are accessorized with necklaces, rings, or bracelets. Three of the women have pierced ears, which was not as common in this era. Every dress is distinct in its fabric or embellishments, and each woman wears her hair differently.



REMEMBERING KIT BOND

May 13, 2025

Two-time Governor and sixth-generation Missourian Christopher "Kit" Bond passed away this morning at the age of 86. When he was elected in 1972, Bond became the youngest governor in Missouri history. He also served as the State Auditor of Missouri from 1971-1973, and a US Senator from 1987-2011.

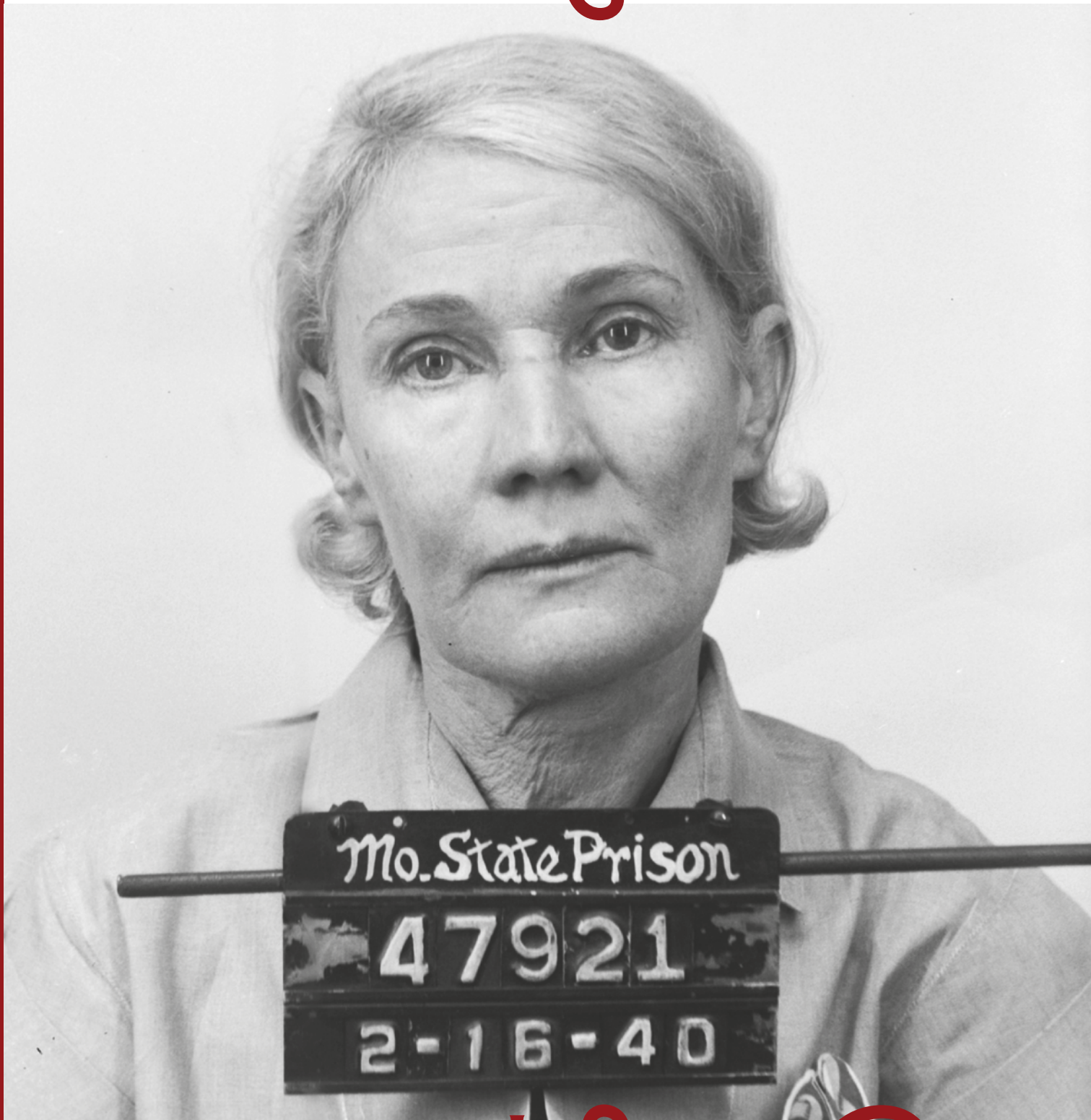


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CATCH ME

TRACING A SERIAL JEWEL THIEF
WITH PENITENTIARY RECORDS
BY KYRSTIN KEIM, RESEARCH ANALYST



Above: Mug shot for Lillian McDowell. February 16, 1940.
(Source: Inmate files; Missouri State Penitentiary, Record Group 213; Missouri State Archives)

If You Can

Time Marks 'Cat-Eye Annie'



Lillian McDowell, alias "Cat-Eye Annie," notorious jewel thief, is shown at left as she looked in St. Louis today after being brought back to stand trial on a charge of stealing \$5,000 worth of jewels from a St. Louis home in 1922. At right, as she appeared in 1907 during the early part of her career.

Above: Article related to McDowell's trial in St. Louis. June 12, 1935. (Source: *The St. Louis Star and Times*)

Between 1907–1936, a female jewel thief, known to the public as Cat Eye Annie, terrorized the United States. In her criminal career, she was wanted in at least nine states, and served time in four different state penitentiaries, including the Missouri State Penitentiary.

While her antics made headlines, she was difficult to catch due to her modus operandi: She would post wanted ads in local newspapers for experienced housekeepers. The ads specifically requested ladies to bring resumes with references from wealthy families. She would then take the resumes of these women, assume their names, and apply for open positions with wealthy families herself. After a short period of employment, she would locate the family's jewels and other valuables, and disappear with them.

Through adopting new identities, Cat Eye Annie was known by more than 30 aliases. Eventually, law enforcement would identify her as wife of James McDowell (another criminal known by many names), Lillian McDowell.

In 1907, Lillian McDowell was operating as a housemaid named Clara Stratton. She worked in the Dyer household in St. Louis for only 3 days before she located their jewels and disappeared with them. Arriving in Chicago, she acted again. She robbed Ira J. Mix, disguised as a housemaid named Elsie Webb. However, before she could be tried for the Mix robbery, she was turned over to authorities in Pennsylvania. In PA, she was wanted for her involvement in a major diamond heist committed by her husband. In 1909, Lillian was acquitted for

her role in the heist, while her husband, James McDowell, was sentenced to 10 years in Riverside Penitentiary.

Her freedom was short-lived. Months later, in 1910, Lillian McDowell (aka Clara Stratton, aka Elsie Web), was brought back to St. Louis to stand trial for the Dyer thefts committed three years earlier. She was again acquitted of all crimes. Fortunately for Lillian, her accuser, Mr. H. Chouteau Dyer, had previously accused two other women of being the maid with the "cat-eyes." Because of this, the jury had reasonable doubt that Lillian was the culprit. Lillian's innocence in Missouri did not resolve her legal troubles nationwide. Next, she was transferred from the St. Louis jail to Chicago, where she would be tried for the 1907 robbery of Ira J. Mix. After years on the run, Lillian was found guilty in this case, and sentenced to the State Penitentiary in Joliet, Illinois for an indeterminate sentence of 1 to 10 years.

Just two years later, in 1913, Lillian was discharged, and turned over to Buffalo, New York for the crimes of grand larceny and receiving stolen property. She was again tried and convicted, but the sentence was deferred and she was turned over to authorities in Toledo, Ohio for more grand larceny charges. She was tried and convicted in Lucas County, Ohio and sentenced to 7 years in the Ohio State Penitentiary. Lillian served two years before receiving an early release by order of Warden J. E. Thomas.

For a decade, Lillian McDowell alluded the spotlight, until 1923, when "Mary McCoy" committed a robbery in New York state. Lillian was located two years later, living in Milwaukee as Julia Archer. She was turned over to the authorities of Buffalo, New York. While awaiting trial in the Erie County, NY jail, she made her first jailbreak. She escaped for a few mere hours before being returned the same day. She was ultimately convicted and sentenced to the Auburn State Penitentiary, but Lillian had no intention of staying.

On May 10, 1926, Lillian McDowell escaped ASP through a tunnel she had dug in the back of her cell, and proceeded to "walk over the wall" on a wooden plank she had found. She was located the next day in an open field by a farmer, who notified the authorities. Then on May 19, 1930, she escaped once more by cutting the wood around the lock in her cell door, and disguising herself with a top coat and fedora stolen from the warden. Authorities initially believed Lillian was hiding within the prison, but after an extensive search turned up nothing, they notified the public of her escape. She was found just a few hours later.

After finishing her 10-year sentence, she was paroled from the Auburn State Penitentiary, only to

No. 2136 *Martha Connors Elsie Webb*

NAME *Lillian M. McDowell* *Lillian McDowell* Assignm *Feb*

RECEIVED *June 1 1911*

County *Cook* Term of Court *May*

Crime *Larceny*

Color *White* Age *29*

Hair *Brown* Eyes *Blue* Nativity *Ohio*

Height *5'4 1/2"* Build *Slender* Weight *126*

Religion *Methodist* Education *C.S.*

Profanity *No* Drink *No*

Smoke *No* Chew *No*

Parents Living *Father dead* Associates *Sister*

Last Home What Age *13* Father Born in *Ohio*

Married *No* Mother *" Indiana*

Wife Living Children

Hereditary Disease How long have you lived in the United States?

Condition of Heart Are you a Naturalized Citizen?

Occupation *House Work* Have you taken out 1st Papers?

Working When Arrested on Present Charge *No*

How Long Before it got *1 month* Are you an Alien?

Name and address of Parents and Family, or Correspondents *Sister Miss Stella Redmond 1278 26th St Chicago, Ill*

Previous Terms Here:

be taken back into custody on a warrant lodged for larceny in Boston, Massachusetts. There, she was tried and convicted as Elsie Webb, and sentenced to the Boston Women's Reformatory. However, this sentence was suspended and she was instead turned over to authorities of St. Louis, Missouri, where she was to stand trial on more robberies.

In St. Louis, her criminal career would come to an end. Beginning in 1935, Lillian McDowell was tried for a 13-year-old jewel robbery from Mrs. George C. McKay. The jury, after deliberating for two hours,

KNOWN ALIASES

Alice Webb

Annie McDowell

Cat Eye Annie

Cat Eye Lil

Cat Eye Mary

Clara Stratton

Eileen O'Connors

Eileen O'Connors

Elise Decker

Elizabeth Becker

Elizabeth Decker

Elsie Becker

Elsie Webb

Elsie Wells

Helen King

Julia Archer

Killie McDowell

Lillian Barrett

Lillian E. Redmond

Lillian Grant

Lillian McDonald

Lillian McDowell

Marcy Darcy

Martha Benson

Martha Connors

Martha Connors

Mary Grant

Mary Little

Mary McCoy

Mary McDowell

Mary Poole

Mrs. J. H. Grant

Nellie Atkinson

Nettie Atkinson

Disclaimer: Many of these aliases are misspellings of another, but were all mentioned within her prison records and/or newspaper articles about her.

STATEMENT OF COURT OFFICERS.

Name of Trial Judge: *George Kersten*
 " " State's Attorney: *John E. W. Wayman*
 Court: *Criminal* Term: *May*
 Date of Sentence: *May 15-1911*
 DETAILS OF CRIME:
Convicted

WANTED
Buffalo, N.Y. see letter in file

Resident or Transient:
 General Reputation:
 Associates:
 Industrious Habits:
 Disposition:
 Was the Crime Attributable to the Use of Liquor:
 Previous Criminal Record, so far as known:
3 Months St. Louis Mo, Jan.

failed to convict her. According to the foreman, Norman Hambeck, two members of the panel held out because they themselves had had difficulties with police. Due to this blatant violation of the juror's oath, there was a new trial with a new jury in January 1936, and this time Lillian McDowell was convicted and sentenced to 12 years at the Missouri State Penitentiary. This sentence was lessened to 8 years due to her age and health.

Her health didn't seem to be an issue however, when she attempted to escape MSP within her first year. In April 1937, while climbing out her window using a rope made of bedsheets, Lillian fell 20-feet after being caught and yelled at by a guard. After this incident, she seemed to have an uneventful stay at the Missouri State Penitentiary, and was released under conditional commutation in 1941.

After release, she disappeared, this time for good. She never appears in the papers, or is known to have been incarcerated again, under any of her aliases. There is no definitive death record, or cemetery record, for Lillian McDowell, the prolific jewel thief. Due to the number of aliases she already had, and her affinity for accumulating more, she could have been anyone when she passed away. We may never know who she really was, or what happened to her after 1941.

Maids Who Figured in Deaver Home Robbery Is Identified as Notorious Woman Burglar

"The Cat-Eyed Girl"



The good memory of Captain of Detectives Frank Brumhill yesterday brought about a quick identification of the maid in the home of C. F. Deaver, 3401 Pillsbury avenue, where robbers yesterday morning held up Mrs. Deaver and made away with \$10,000 worth of valuables. The maid is known to police as "the cat-eyed girl," and is notorious in a dozen cities. She gets employment in wealthy homes, looks over the ground and then calls in confederates to stage during holdups.

School Safe With Ballots Cracked in Morningside-Edina Dispute

Britain Exerts New Pressure on U. S. to Attend Hague Parley

London, May 22.—Austin Chamberlain, government leader, in the House of Commons today told questioners that a blue book on the Geneva economic conference was being prepared and would be available tomorrow. Mr. Chamberlain said steps were taken informally in Rome to inquire whether an invitation to participate in the coming work at The Hague would be acceptable to the United States government. The views of the United States government were contained in a message which had been communicated to the American press through the American ambassador in London. The British government had no information, he said.

Tampering With Strongbox Is Climax of Seven-Year Controversy.

Morningside's seven-year fight with Edina over a site for a new school reached a climax yesterday when it was discovered that the school safe containing the ballot of Saturday's election had been blown open. Last night, while deputy sheriffs were at work tracing clues to the safebreakers, charges and counter charges were being hurled in the restricted residence district which comprises Morningside and the farming district which is Edina. Morningside lost. Morningside lost Saturday's election because under the law a proposition for a new school site must have a majority of the legal voters of the school district. The total is fixed at 734. The ballots were counted Saturday night and were

Servant Decoy Recognized by Police as 'Cat Eyed Girl.'

Check on Bandit Band Made by Captain of Detectives.

The maid who helped three burglars rob the home of C. F. Deaver, 3401 Pillsbury avenue, of \$10,000 worth of jewelry yesterday was identified last night as the "cat-eyed girl," known to police of many cities. This woman, named because she has one blue and one brown eye, is wanted in New York, Chicago and St. Louis for similar robberies. That the maid was an accomplice of the bandits was clearly established when a picture of the "cat-eyed girl" was taken to the Deaver home. Mr. and Mrs. Deaver and several servants identified the picture as that of the missing maid.

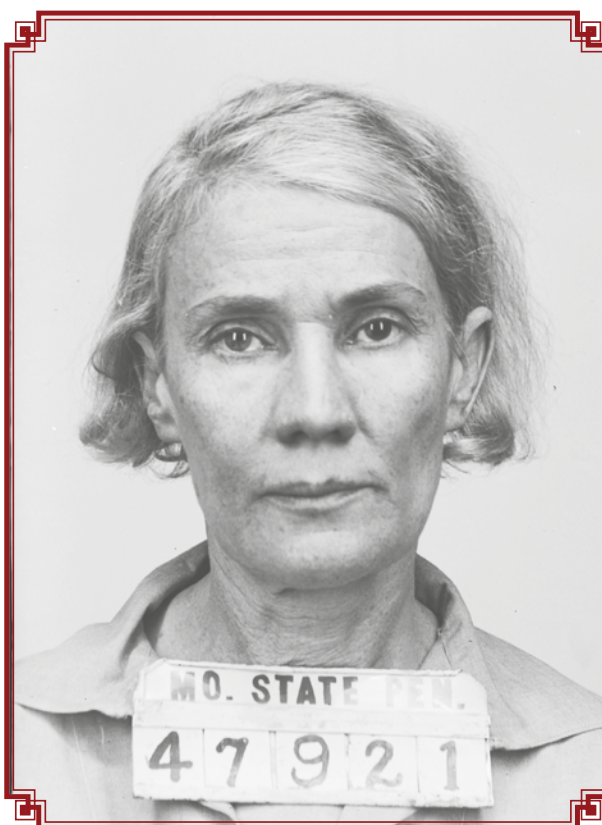
Real Name Lillian Redmond. The "cat-eyed girl's" real name is believed to be Lillian E. Redmond. In other cities she has operated under the names of Elsie Webb, Lillie McDowell, Nellie Alderson, and Clara Stratton. When she applied for a position at the Deaver home last Thursday she gave the name of Mary Little. The robbery in St. Louis, which she carried off without help, was in many ways similar to the one at the Deaver home. Although St. Louis police connect her with robberies in several fashionable homes there, the specific charge for which she now is being sought is the theft of \$5,000 worth of jewels from the home of George C. Mackay, wealthy St. Louis resident.

Locks Woman in Closet. In that robbery the "cat-eyed girl" locked Mrs. Mackay in a closet, after smothering her with a revolver, and waited away with the loot. The identification of the woman was due to the memory of Frank Brumhill, captain of detectives. On February 11 he received a letter from Michael O'Brien, chief of police of St. Louis, enclosing a circular bearing picture of the "cat-eyed girl."

The details of the Deaver robbery pointed to the work of a professional servant girl thief. Captain Brumhill went to the Deaver home for a minute description of the missing maid. Mrs. Deaver described her as about 35 years old, about five feet, seven inches in height, about 140 pounds in weight.

Above: News clipping related to McDowell's robbery of C. F. Deaver. In this article, the author claims Lillian had one brown eye and one blue eye. May 23, 1922. (Source: *Star Tribune, Minneapolis, Minnesota*)

Left: Lillian McDowell's entry in the Joliet State Prison Register. 1911. (Source: *Illinois State Archives*)



Above: Mug shot for Lillian McDowell. (Source: *Inmate files; Missouri State Penitentiary, Record Group 213; Missouri State Archives*)

AN UNEXPECTED

GENEALOGICAL RECORDS
IN THE DESE DIVISION OF
INSTRUCTION COLLECTION

BY AMY C. NICKLESS
PROCESSING ARCHIVIST

TREASURE TROVE

Form A
General Information

APPLICATION FOR CLASSIFICATION
and Annual Report of Superintendent to the State Board of Education

This report is to be completed in triplicate (typewritten if possible) under the direction of the superintendent of schools. One copy is to be submitted to the state supervisor on or before October 15. Two copies are to be retained; one for the office files and one to be submitted at the time of the annual visit of the state supervisor.

The school system is to be approved by the supervisor, all data on the report must be complete and accurate. Please record all information on all forms, A, B, C, D, E, and F, as of the end of the first month of school.

FINANCIAL DATA

1. Total assessed valuation, (Dec. last) \$ 5917,790.00 (in dollars)

2. Indebtedness: a. Unpaid bonds \$ 470,000.00
b. Other debts \$ none
Total indebtedness \$ 470,000.00

3. Tax levy: a. Teacher fund \$ 1.10 cents
b. Incidental fund90 cents
c. Building fund40 cents
d. Sinking fund35 cents
e. Interest fund20 cents
Total levy: \$ 2.95 cents

4. Annual non-resident tuition and non-resident high school transportation charge per pupil in excess of state payment: a. Tuition: (1) Elementary \$ 90.00
(2) High School \$ 135.00
b. Transportation \$ none

5. Missouri Financial Accounting (Yes) ☒ No ☐
System is used, circle No
If other accounting system is used, give name _____

ORGANIZATION

1. Type of organization a. White 8-2 8-3 (8-4) 6-6 6-3-3 Other type _____
(circle) b. Negro 8-2 8-3 8-4 6-6 6-3-3 Other type _____

2. Date School White Sept. 4 19 1956 3. Date School White May 24 19 57
opened: Negro Sept. 4 19 1956 will close: Negro May 24 19 57
White 180
Negro 180

4. Actual number of days school will be in session: (including legal holidays; state, district, and county teachers meetings legally authorized: _____)

RECORDS (Check records used)

☒ 1. Pupils academic record ☒ 6. Personal data (age, etc.) ☒ 11. Activity record of pupil
☐ 2. Family data ☐ 7. College record of graduates ☒ 12. Census record
☒ 3. Attendance ☒ 8. Employment of graduates ☐ 13. Others (List) _____
☒ 4. Intelligence test results ☒ 9. Behavior _____
☒ 5. Standard achievement test ☒ 10. Health _____

ENROLLMENT - (If your Negro elementary pupils are transported to another school district, show Negro resident pupils by grades. If integrated list all students as white.)

		Kinder- garten	Elementary School								Total grades 1-8	High School					Total grades 9-12
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8		9	10	11	12		
Resident	White	140	109	134	121	96	101	63	102	93	819	144	129	110	98	481	
	Negro		16	12	10	8	10	5	6	7	74						
Non-Resident	White								1	1		38	31	16	21	106	
	Negro		2	1		1					4						
Total	White	140	109	134	121	96	101	63	102	94	820	182	160	126	119	587	
	Negro		18	12	11	8	11	5	6	7	78						
GRAND TOTAL		140	127	146	132	104	112	68	108	101	898	182	160	126	119	587	

If any of the non-resident pupils are out of state, please show the number.

JEFFERSON
Dist. R-VI Festus

Reorganized R-6 Festus, Jeff. Co. Mo.
Number and/or Name of School District

711 West Main
Street address, or route

Post Office
Jefferson

County
Jefferson

Secretary B
Sara M. Wood

Superintendent
Ralph B. Tynes

School Year
19 56

Form B
Teacher Data

Page 1

19 56 19 57

APPLICATION FOR CLASSIFICATION
and Annual Report of Superintendent to the State Board of Education

Report of Reorganized School District R-6 Address 711 W. Main St., Festus, Missouri
(Name of school district) (Street) (City)

(Report all elementary and high school teachers, supervisors, librarians, principals, and the superintendent of schools. Group in each school beginning with the principal, and in the elementary school, grade 1, grade 2, etc., and in the high school by subject matter areas.)

Name of teacher, and name of college attended	Race W-White N-Negro	Sex M-Male F-Female	Annual salary	College attended hours	College semester hours Graduate credits	Highest degree held	Years experience (count current year as one)		Certificate grade and expiration date	For elementary teachers, state grades taught, with no. of pupils in each grade; for high school teachers, name courses and fields. Administrators and supervisors show position.	Is teacher certified or specially qualified for what he is teaching?	Teaching load	
							Present position	Total				No. of sections	No. of pupils
20. Teacher: Billie Jean Boyles Colleges attended: U. of Miss. for Women	W	F	3800.00	136	0	BS in Ed.	1	1	51	English III Speech	yes	1	114
21. Teacher: Ann Hammock Colleges attended: U. of Miss. for Women	W	F	3500.00	116	0	BS in Ed.	1	1	51	Girl's Phy. Ed. Girl's Physiology Study Hall	yes yes yes	6 1 1	285 11 50
22. Teacher: James Byrd Colleges attended: Mississippi State	W	M	3550.00	110	0	BS in Ed.	1	1	51	English II English I Algebra	yes yes yes	3 1 1	90 33 29
23. Teacher: Cloyd Nickless Colleges attended: S.E. Mo. Kansas City U.	W	M	3700.00	135	8	AB	1	2	40	Citizenship Government	yes yes	1 1	121 20
24. Teacher: William Hampton Colleges attended: A. Kansas State	W	M	3700.00	124	0	BS in Ed.	1	1	42	General Science Chemistry	yes yes	1 1	162 35
25. Teacher: Cora Dreyer Colleges attended: S.E. Mo. State W. Va. U.	W	F	5350.00	156	12	AB	1	23	44	Acting Principal			

* Last half of the year F - Pending

Above: Composite image showing the table header and Cloyd Ellis Nickless' 1956-1957 school year record. (Source: Division of Instruction, Department of Elementary and Secondary Information, Record Group 105.03; Missouri State Archives)

Left: First page of Festus R-VI application for 1956-1957. (Source: Division of Instruction, Department of Elementary and Secondary Information, Record Group 105.03; Missouri State Archives)

For those wishing to study school houses their family attended, Record Group 105 - Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE)'s Division of Instruction records can be extraordinarily valuable. The Division of Instruction tracked records on all public-school districts from 1974-1999. Its predecessor organizations, State Superintendent and the Office of Education (1839-1945), and Department of Education (1945-1974), covered earlier years.

Encompassing the years 1907-1987, the collection includes a great deal of data to keep researchers working for hours. Information exists by school year for each public-school district in the state from 1907 to 1969, with a few minor gaps in coverage for elementary-only districts.

The crown jewel of the collection is the Application for Classification of Schools, 1948-1969 series. The reports include school financial data, organizational information, enrollment by grade, general

enrollment and teacher data, high school program of studies, and school district classification. The reports also include a wealth of information on the teachers: the college(s) they attended, their race and sex, their highest degree held, hours of bachelors and post-bachelor's coursework, and their teaching load. For high school educators, their schedule of classes for a given year, extracurricular activities they sponsored, and their salaries were also provided. This data covers both larger districts and public one-room school houses.

Another gem in the collection is the High School Reports, 1907-1948 series, the precursor of Applications for Classification of Schools. Despite the name, these reports do not solely focus on high schools, but instead focus on districts that included a high school. These reports contain statistical data on the schools and their pupils, and the schools' courses of study. For the high school teachers, the reports provide the teacher's

Two additional series focus on the school districts as a whole. The Annual Report of County Clerks to

Below: Festus R-VI High School Program of Studies from 1967–1968.
(Source: Division of Instruction, Department of Elementary and Secondary
information. Record Group 105.03; Missouri State Archives)

APPLICATION FOR CLASSIFICATION and Annual Report of Superintendent to the State Board of Education										DISTRICT CODE JEFFERSON Dist. R-VI Festus
This report is to be completed in triplicate (typewritten) under the direction of the superintendent of schools. Submit original and first carbon copy to the state supervisor October 15.										
Please record all information on all forms, A, B, C, E, F, and G as of the end of the first month of school.										
I. ORGANIZATION 1. Type of organization (Check) ☐										
8-4	6-6	6-2-4	6-3-3	Other Type						
				X						
2. Length of School Term (From Annual School Calendar) 180 days 188										
II. ENROLLMENT		Total	Resident	Non-resident	III. RECORDS (Check records used)					
Kindergarten		218	218		1. Pupils academic record		X			
Ungraded (Elementary) MR. 1/		21	20	1	2. Family data		X			
Grade 1		203	203		3. Attendance		X			
Grade 2		181	181		4. Intelligence test results		X			
Grade 3		187	187		5. Standard achievement test		X			
Grade 4		172	172		6. Personal data (age, etc.)		X			
Grade 5		163	163		7. College record of graduates		X			
Grade 6		160	160		8. Employment of graduates		X			
Grade 7		186	186		9. Behavior		X			
Grade 8		157	157		10. Health		X			
TOTAL: Ungraded Elem. and Grades 1 through 8		1433	1432	1	11. Activity Record of pupil		X			
Ungraded (High School) MR. 1/		34	34		12. Census record		X			
Grade 9		220	170	50	13. Others (List below)					
Grade 10		227	190	37						
Grade 11		186	150	36						
Grade 12		179	145	34						
TOTAL: Ungraded High School & Grades 9 through 12		846	689	157						
TOTAL: Kindergarten thru - 12		2497	2339	158						
IV. TEACHER DATA		Number of Teachers		DUE OCTOBER		Leave Blank for State Office Use				
Central Office Staff		1								
Kindergarten		3								
						Number of Teachers				

Number and/or Name of School District
Festus R-6 School Dist.
 Street Address, or Route
802 West Main Street
 Post Office
Festus

County
Jefferson
 State
MISSOURI

Superintendent of Schools
Ralph B. Tynes
 Secretary Board of Education
W. E. Evans
 President Board of Education
Oleann G. Wilim

How can the Division of Instruction help?

*The author's late grandfather
Cloyd Ellis Nickless*

Left: Cloyd Ellis Nickless, c. 1970. (Source: Courtesy of Amy Nickless)



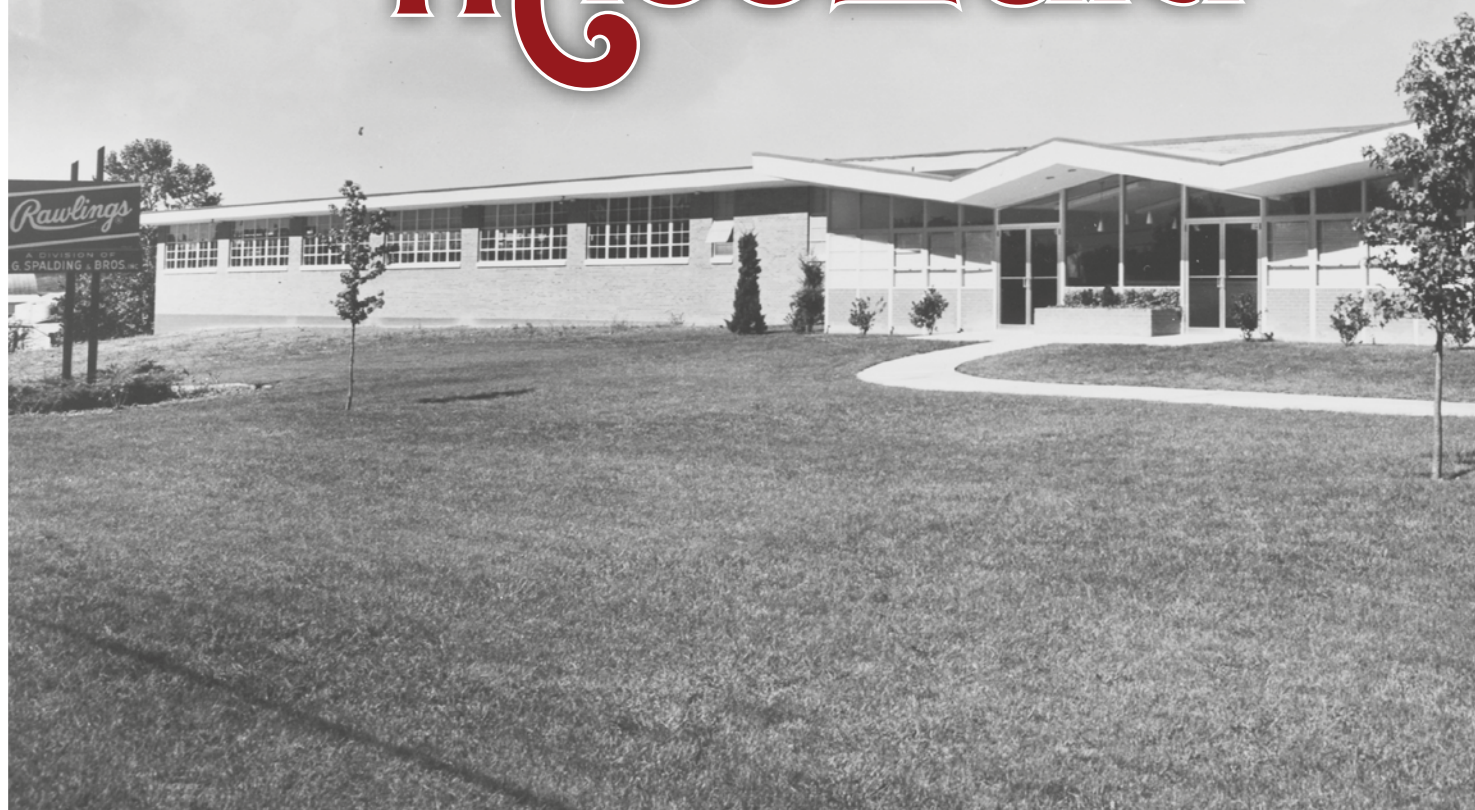
To help show how useful the Division of Instruction collection can be, here is an example from the author's family history. When processing began, there was no expectation of the discoveries that served as inspiration for this article. The author's late grandfather, Cloyd Ellis Nickless, taught in a one-room school house for the first couple years of his teaching career (early-to-mid 1950s), but then transitioned to a larger school district for the 1956–1957 school year. This transition is recorded in these records.

It was known that Nickless obtained his undergraduate degree from then Southeast Missouri State Teacher's College in Cape Girardeau (now Southeast Missouri State University) and that he taught social studies at Festus R-VI in Jefferson County for the majority of his career. From the Application for Classification of Schools series, the family mystery of where he completed post-graduate coursework was solved: Kansas City University (now University of Missouri–Kansas City). It was possible to walk through his teaching career with these records and see what his class schedule was, the salary he earned, and that he never took on sponsoring an extra-curricular activity, probably since he also pastored a rural church at the time. In examining his teaching schedule, it showed he focused on teaching Civics before transitioning to American History, which he loved and frequently discussed with the author. The records also showed that his teaching certificate specifically covered these subjects.

If you are interested in additional information on Missouri's schools, educators, and school buildings, consider also exploring the Annual Reports of Public Schools in-person or on Missouri Digital Heritage, or the School Building Abandonment Applications collection. The former collection includes statistical data on public schools, reports from private schools, and educational data by county. The latter shows locations and final disposition of many rural one-room school houses. Also consider reviewing the Missouri School District Reorganization Commission (Spainhower Study) collection. The commission, more commonly known as the Spainhower Study after its chair, Representative James Spainhower, conducted research on school districts in the late 1960s to see how to best reorganize Missouri's school districts, primarily the rural ones that had low attendance. The collection features a series of school district fact sheets from the 1966–1967 school year which includes tax information, building inventories, and lists of employees in the district for that school year and what they taught. The commission also held meetings in all counties and at most school districts in the state, so it is also possible to discover public comments about the districts or the reorganization process in the collection. The commissions' final report was issued in 1968.

As always, the Missouri State Archives is here to help you explore these collections when you visit or place a research request online.

MADE IN Missouri



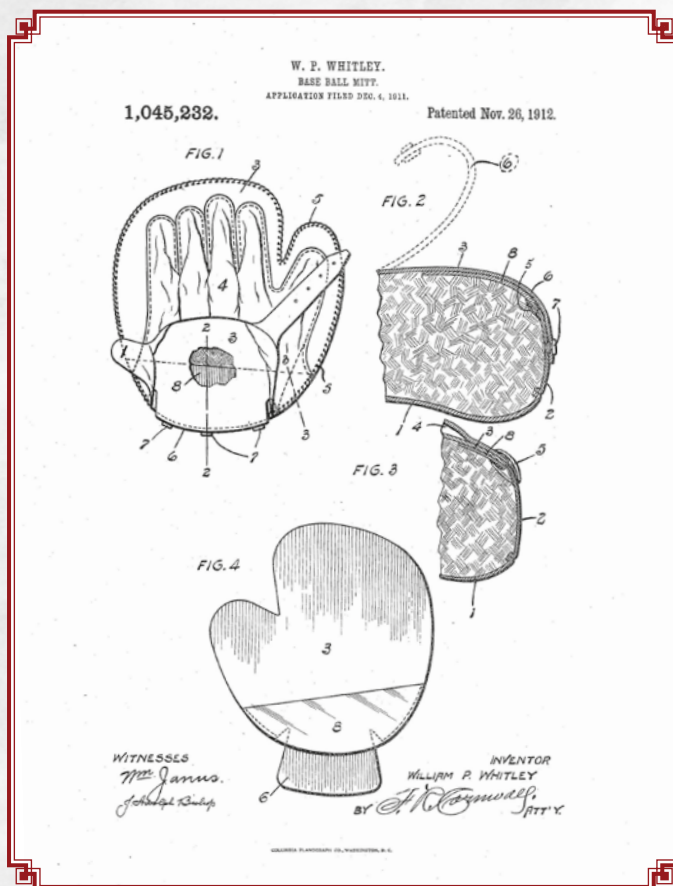
Above Left: Rawlings factory in Ava, Missouri. Undated. (Source: Department of Economic Development, Division of Commerce and Industrial Development Photograph Collection, Record Group 104.001; Missouri State Archives)

In collaboration with Show-Me America 250, the celebration commemorating 250 years since the signing of the Declaration of Independence, the Missouri Secretary of State's office and the Missouri State Archives created an exhibit highlighting

revolutionary people, products, and concepts from the Show-Me State. Stay tuned for further development with this project in 2026. This exhibit is currently divided into three categories. An entry from each section is listed in this article.



GAME CHANGERS RAWLINGS



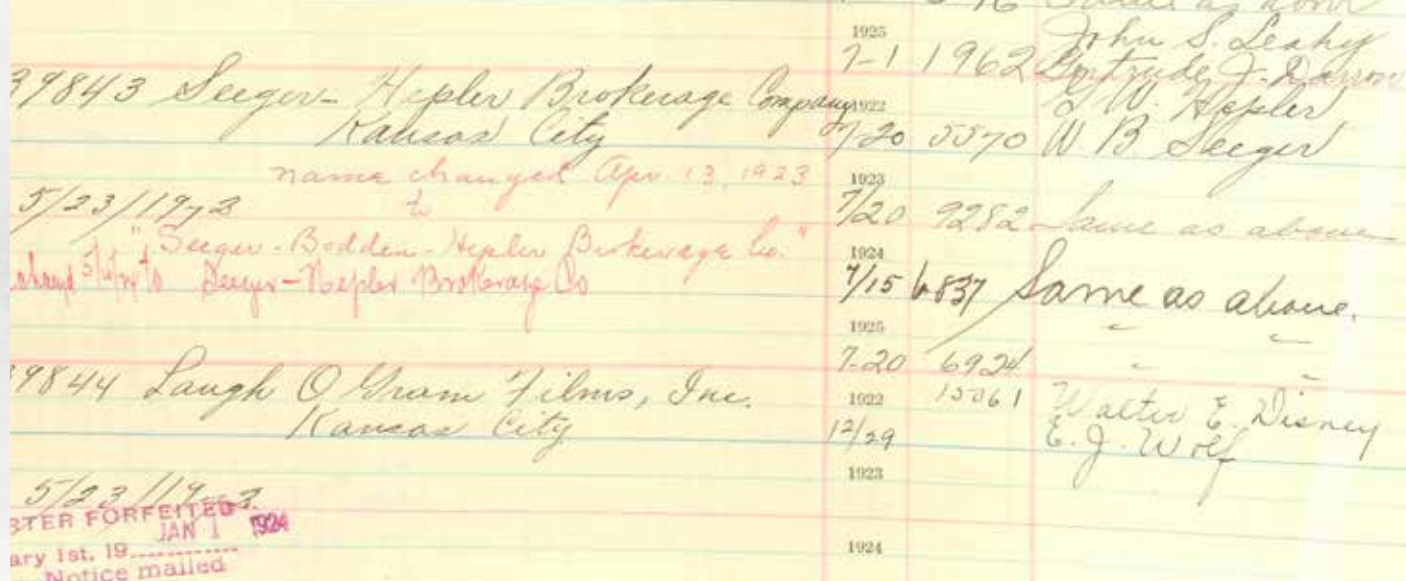
Above: Patent application filed by William P. Whitley of Rawlings for a "base ball mitt." The mitt differs from modern baseball gloves in that it does not have a section connecting the thumb to other fingers. While ineffective compared to later gloves, it did provide greater protection than the previous gloves. 1911. (Source: United States Patent and Trademark Office)

In 1887, two St. Louis brothers, Alfred and George Rawlings, opened a sporting goods business. Rawlings quickly became known for creating and innovating products for football, baseball, fishing, and beyond.

As the company grew in the twentieth century, Rawlings established factories in Missouri towns. In 1959, the small town of Ava became the home of a Rawlings plant. Among the sporting goods produced at the Ava facility were baseball gloves, one of Rawlings' most successful products. Even today, Rawlings gloves are still the most popular among Major League players.

Licking, a town in Texas County, was home to two Rawlings factories. Rawlings came to Licking in 1960, and workers at the original 45,000-square foot factory produced baseballs, arguably the product most closely associated with the Rawlings brand. Rawlings has been the sole manufacturer of baseballs for Major League Baseball since 1977. Because of this association between the town and the sporting goods company, a water tower in Licking still has red paint resembling the seams of a baseball.

While St. Louis continues to serve as the home of Rawlings, the Ava and Licking factories closed in the early 2000s. Ava's plant closed in 2001, and Licking's two plants closed in 2002.



INNOVATORS

UB IWERKS & WALT DISNEY



Born and raised in Kansas City, Ubbe "Ub" Iwerks met Walt Disney in 1919 while working at Pesmen-Rubin Commercial Art Studio. After being laid off, they accepted jobs at the Kansas City Slide Company. It was here their animation careers began, creating advertising films using the "cut-out" method of animation – joining appendages together with pins and moving them under the camera.

In 1922, Iwerks joined Disney's new company, Laugh-O-Gram Films, as the chief animator. When the studio went bankrupt two years later, Iwerks followed Disney to Hollywood, joining the Disney Brothers Cartoon Studio.

In the late 1920s, Mickey Mouse became a success for Disney Studios, and while the name is synonymous today with Walt Disney, it was actually Ub Iwerks who is credited with first sketching the character and animating the first Mickey Mouse silent cartoon, Plane Crazy. In 1930, Iwerks left Disney to start his own company, Iwerks Studios.

Iwerks found his way back to Disney and helped engineer it to new heights. Roy O. Disney once said, "Ub managed to solve a lot of problems for us." Iwerks invented a multi-head optical printer that could combine live-action and animated footage that would be used in Melody Time and Song of the South. Iwerks's technical innovations won him two Academy Awards and moved Disney to the forefront of photographic effects.

Iwerks also helped in the development of Disney theme park attractions such as "it's a small world!", The Haunted Mansion, and The Hall of Presidents, and continued to devote his time to the creation of the Walt Disney World project before passing away in July 1971.

Top: Laugh-O-Gram listing in Corporation Register for 1922–1925 (Source: Corporations, Office of the Secretary of State, Record Group 5; Missouri State Archives)

Below: The theatrical release poster for "Plane Crazy", 1928. This silent film is the first appearance of both Mickey and Minnie Mouse. It was animated by Ub Iwerks. (Source: Walt Disney Productions)

CULINARY MILESTONES

READY MADE MIX



Above: Aunt Jemima Mills trademark. 1912. (Source: Commissions, Office of the Secretary of State, Record Group 5; Missouri State Archives)

Below: Aunt Jemima original trademark. 1890. (Source: Library of Congress)



Pancakes are a staple American breakfast food. They have been on our tables for over 130 years. Before PopTarts and Eggo waffles, the original fast-food was "ready-mix" pancakes.

In 1888, Chris L. Rutt and partner Charles G. Underwood purchased a small flour mill in St. Joseph. In the first year of business as Pearl Milling Company, Rutt experimented with a formula to create pancakes from only water, milk, and a "ready-mix" blend of grains and powders. In 1889, he finalized his recipe, and Pearl Milling Company began selling Self-Rising Pancake Flour. No more would home chefs have to worry about measuring out every ingredient. An era of simple cooking had begun.

Later that year, to further distinguish their product, Rutt and Underwood renamed their company Aunt Jemima Manufacturing Company, and began branding their products with Aunt Jemima, a caricature of an African American woman that Rutt had seen at a local vaudeville performance.

Though their product was groundbreaking, Rutt and Underwood were unable to maintain their business, and Aunt Jemima Manufacturing was sold to Randolph Truett Davis Milling Company. R.T. Davis already owned the largest flour mills on the Missouri River. It was Davis who perfected the formula – improving flavor and texture, and adding powdered milk – completing the recipe. In 1914, the ready-mix product was so successful that Davis renamed his entire enterprise to Aunt Jemima Mills Company.

Aunt Jemima was modeled after the "Mammy" archetype that associated Black women with the life of domestic servitude. Advertisements and public portrayals of Aunt Jemima persisted through generations of rebranding. In 2020, after 130 years, the Aunt Jemima name and character were discontinued.

Today, the company, owned by PepsiCo since 2001, operates under their original name: Pearl Milling Company.



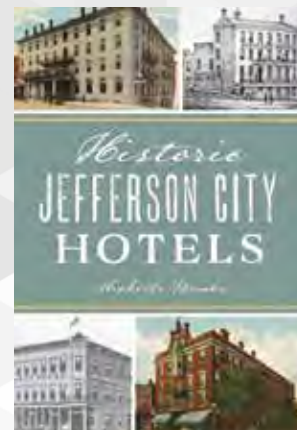
UPCOMING THURSDAY SPEAKER SERIES EVENTS

HISTORIC JEFFERSON CITY HOTELS BY MICHELLE BROOKS

To be published January 13, 2026

Thursday, January 15, 2026, 7 p.m.

While the Capital City grew from a frontier wilderness, hotels were an anchor, such as the 80-year City Hotel. When hundreds of legislators arrived every two years, hotels were a necessity, as were boarding houses like the Lansdown sisters. As arguments continued whether the Capitol should move elsewhere, hotels were always at the forefront of amenities and progress. The Hotel Madison and the Monroe House thrived with expansions, renovations and innovations. These substantial structures also housed community social events, from ladies' teas at the Central Hotel to dances behind the Farmers Home, and civic meetings, from organizing to build a bridge across the Missouri River to political debates. Some of the city's most scintillating moments occurred at these gathering places, including the Pulitzer shooting, the surrender of Frank James, and the visit of a Russian grand duke.



HANNIBAL'S INVISIBLES BY G. FAYE DANT

Thursday, February 12, 2026, 7 p.m.

When Mark Twain published *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* in 1885, he turned Hannibal, Missouri, into one of the most famous towns in the American imagination. But like Twain's novel, Hannibal's idyllic façade often elided the darker racial violence that had marked its past, and it overlooked the history and humanity of the Black residents who have called Hannibal home for generations. Without them, there would be no "America's hometown."

In *Hannibal's Invisibles*, G. Faye Dant, a Hannibal resident and the executive director of Jim's Journey: The Huck Finn Freedom Center, tells the incredible story of the Black community in this small Missouri town, giving voice to a history that has been marginalized far too long. Hear first-hand accounts from those who survived enslavement, faced racism after emancipation, endured Jim Crow, and contributed to the triumphs of the civil rights movement. These are the stories of Black doctors, entrepreneurs, and teachers who helped uplift the community, and remembrances of the countless individuals who gave richness and meaning to Hannibal's everyday life. The vintage photographs and historical documents collected here are a celebration of these resilient people who built and sustained this corner of the Midwest, despite the immense obstacles they met at every turn.



NOT IN OUR WILDEST DREAMS

Documentary by Missouri Humanities, presented with Missouri Supreme Court Justices

Thursday, March 19, 2026, 7 p.m.

Not In Our Wildest Dreams explores the role of the Missouri Supreme Court in the state's past, present, and future through Missouri's female judges, from the court's first woman judge—the Honorable Ann Covington—in 1989 to its historic female majority bench today. The film highlights the court's teamwork in promoting civic education and empowering youth engagement, as well as the personal journeys of the trailblazers behind the black robes.



MISCELLANEOUS UPDATES

UPDATED CONTACT INFORMATION REQUIRED

We know you've enjoyed monthly mail from us over the years (Thursday Evening Speaker Series postcards), but in 2026 we are moving away from physical mailers. To ensure you are notified about Friends programming, please send your full name and preferred email address to MSAOutreach@sos.mo.gov.

WEBSITE UPDATES

The Archives databases were migrated and updated in early September.

www.sos.mo.gov/archives/resources/resources

We did this to ensure:

- The color scheme is consistent sitewide.
- All databases are more mobile responsive.
- Databases with table view results (like death certificates) allow the user to sort by any of the fields.
- Year ranges are searchable on the Judicial and Supreme Court databases.

Please note, saved bookmarks will need to be updated. As always, if you need to make the page bigger or smaller you can use the zoom functions by selecting Ctrl and the + or – on a computer or by pinching in or out on a phone or tablet.

MISSOURI DIGITAL HERITAGE

Missouri Digital Heritage added new collections this year from several different contributing institutions.

www.sos.mo.gov/mdh/

Containing over 49,000 individual images, **Missouri State Road Surveys** was the largest collection added to Missouri Digital Heritage in 2025. The **State Road Surveys** contain commissioners' reports, field notes, surveys and relinquishments for some of the earliest state roads in Missouri. Names of officials, property owners, relinquishers, towns and landmarks were indexed and are searchable on MDH. The collection is best browsed by road, then searched by name within the road.

Missouri Vital Statistics Reports was a collaboration between the Missouri State Archives and the Missouri Bureau of Vital Records. **Vital Statistics** contains statistical data on births, deaths, marriages, and divorces in the state for 1908–2022.

The Missouri State Archives also partnered with the **Mark Twain Boyhood Home** and Museum to digitize glass plate negatives of Mark Twain's home in Hannibal (on cover), correspondence, and early maps of the Hannibal area.

Students from Missouri Southern State University processed the **Joplin Tornado, May 22, 2011** collection as a class project. The collection contains 161 photographs taken shortly after the devastating EF-5 tornado hit Joplin. The photographs were taken by photographers from *The Joplin Globe*, Joplin Schools, St. John's Hospital and the general public.

The **Missouri Register**, held by the Missouri State Archives, contains monthly updates to the *Code of State Regulations*. This collection currently spans 1976–1999, and is being updated regularly.



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